

**News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth**

**For Immediate Release**

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**DEFENSE BILLS INCLUDE KEY SUPPORT FOR TROOPS, VETERANS**

**December 19, 2005, Washington, D.C.** – Early this morning, the House passed the Defense Appropriations and Defense Authorization conference reports. U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth supported both bills, which included key funding for increased TRICARE coverage for reservists and their families, a military personnel pay increase, and \$50 billion in emergency spending for current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Herseth said, “While we have many pressing needs at home, ensuring that our troops are as safe and as well-equipped as they can be is a top priority for all Americans. I’m proud to support our men and women in service by helping to make sure that their needs are met – both when they are fighting for us abroad and when they return to civilian life.”

The conference agreement appropriates a total of \$453.5 billion for defense programs, including the \$50 billion in spending for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill also included \$3.8 billion for avian flu preparedness and \$29 billion for disaster assistance to hurricane damaged areas in the Gulf region.

Specific South Dakota projects in the Defense Appropriations conference report include:

B-1 Secure Digital Communications Improvement - \$3 million

Strategic Defense Systems Manufacturing Technology at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology - \$2 million

Nano-Reinforced Structures and Advanced Multi-Functional Structures for Space Program at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology - \$2.4 million

Future Affordable Multi-Utility Materials for the Army Future Combat Systems at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology - \$3 million

Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology for Ammunition at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology - \$1.8 million

Next Generation Joining Technology Research Initiative at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology - \$1.2 million

Transition Laser Engineered Shaping Technology at RPM & Associates, Inc. in Rapid City - \$1 million

Advanced Electronics Rosebud Integration Center on the Rosebud Sioux Tribe - \$1.8 million

Fatigue Odometer for Vehicle Components and Gun Barrels. Partnership between the South Dakota Science and Technology Corporation, Augusta Systems, Inc., South Dakota State University, and the Batcheller Consulting Group. - \$2.4 million

Polyclonal Human Antibody Production System for Hematech (Sioux Falls) - \$2.1 million

3M, Colorimetric PDA-based Biosensor - \$4.2 million

Lightweight Tactical All Terrain Vehicle, Polaris - \$1.2 million

Navy Cancer Vaccine Program. Clinical trials to involve a medical facility in South Dakota. - \$1 million

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*Congresswoman Stephanie Herseith serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives. She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota's interests: Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs and Resources.*